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THE SESSION OF 1891.

# A SPEECH

DELIVERED BY

NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN, M.P.

IN THE REGINA TOWN HALL,

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1891.

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THE LEADER COMPANY [LIMITED.]  
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Mr. Chairman, electors of Western Assiniboia, after a long and laborious Session I come before you to give an account of my stewardship. We all "feel good." You have had a great harvest here, and I have not had a bad harvest at Ottawa. (Cheers.) You remember that when some — aye, many — doubted this country, I never doubted it. In the hours of darkness, my faith shone as clear as it does to day. We started out eight years ago to remove bad laws, to fight administrative follies, and one by one they have fallen, and to-day there remains but one thing to do to complete the programme, and that is to get the second homestead for those settlers who entered for land between the 2nd June, 1884, and the 2nd

June, 1886. You, who have watched what has gone forward, know that all this has been accomplished only by hard, persistent fighting. Repulsed, forming again for the charge and again repulsed, forming once again and once more repulsed, once more arming for the onslaught, until the opposition gave way, and the position was taken. (Cheers.) Our work hitherto has been iconoclastic — breaking down administrative idols. Now, all is clear for the constructive statesman whenever he shall appear. What may not be done here in the North-West, not only for the North-West, but for Canada — for nation-building — by statesmanship! Here are millions of fruitful acres, stretching away up to the Peace River, swelling from the Red River to the bases of those



sublime hills which may challenge comparison with the Alps: lands for wheat; lands growing gigantic root crops; lands in which vegetables teem; lands of unrivalled pasturage; and over across the Atlantic millions of men and women cowering under tyranny, and cramped in over-crowded states and isles! To bring those millions and make free men of them in free homes—men who will love, and whose children will love, the immeasurable Canaan where they will have found a happy and expansive refuge from their Egyptian bondage; a land where we call no man master or lord, and bow our head to none but God. (Cheers). This is the problem for the statesman! This is the problem, that solved, will make Canada independent, powerful, and a blessing to humanity. It is not in human nature but that during those years there should have been some feelings not of the most calm—not of the sweetest, stirred. But now, looking back on the great work done, would that we could bathe our minds and hearts, so far as they are charged with a drop of bitterness, in some happy stream of forgetfulness, and with bosom full of truth, courage and charity, brace ourselves for whatever good work the future may offer! Standing here today as on a mount of vision, I look back and I see this land a decade ago, a wilderness. In the present I see thriving towns growing into cities; a world-highway with Hong Kong for one terminus and Liverpool for another; railways running north and south. In the future, a teeming, prosperous population; with great cities; with great marts; trains bearing our grain not only to Montreal, but to Churchill and the steamers clearing Hudson Bay to make Liverpool in three or four days (cheers); stately halls and temples; the tall chimneys that tell of industrial life at its height; the towered structures and domes of learning, of commerce, of art; the North-West no place to be patronized, or squeezed, or slighted, but making herself felt as the most potent factor in the great Dominion of Canada. (Cheers.)

Now, I do not want to fight battles over again. That is barren work. But

I must refer to the last election, men of Assiniboia, for you fought here a battle that will be memorable in the history of Canada—which speaks in trumpet tones to all politicians: "Do your duty; trust the people; serve them well; and they will never fail you!" What was the significance of your fight? When you elected me in 1887, I said to myself, "Come what may, I will show the people of Canada what a member of Parliament ought to be—loyal to, but no slave of, party; regarding the people as his masters, those whom he is bound to serve at any cost—even though I should never again sit in Parliament." For I knew the nature and danger of the task I was undertaking.

Well, I went down in 1887 to Parliament. In that Session, in every Session, I fought for your interests, no matter whom I offended—utterly careless about personal ambition. It was a novel course to take in Canada. People said again and again that I had killed myself; that I should never be re-elected; that all the resources of power would be used against me. But I will say this for the great man that is gone—my illustrious leader—my friend, side by side with whom I fought in '78, whose confidence I enjoyed, of whose counsel I had the privilege, and whose ghostly finger still beckons me towards great national aims; however much my independence may have irked smaller hearts, it never made any difference between him and me, and, looking at his long public career, laden with labours and crowned with great deeds,

"Still before my eyes I keep his bright example  
For I love his lofty courage and his  
perfect faith"

(Cheers), his perfect faith in Canada and Canada's future. Power was used against me, but not by his wish. A banded combination of appalling resources was made. They came against me with craft and venom and confidence; but in the grand fiery breath of your noble support they melted away into Stygian air. (Loud cheers.)

#### THE ELECTION.

It will, Sir, be desirable to travel back a little. Many of you will remember that in the winter of last year a certain

person came up here from Ottawa and wanted to start another Conservative paper. I wont name him—I have no desire to stir up any feelings. It would be an abominable thing to let a drop of bitterness exude here, and if there is any enemy here let him fancy that I embrace him—that I fold him to my heart, of course metaphorically, (laughter). Well, I wont name him. In the words of Moore:

“O breathe not his name,  
Let it rest in the shade.”

(laughter.) I wired Sir John Macdonald as to whether this person had any authority, and Sir John's answer was that he could not believe that the individual would do anything so improper in a civil servant. But we know as a fact that he approached Acton Burrows, who in his turn approached others. A certain gentleman—a true gentleman—in Winnipeg was approached and he said, “What is the object? You cannot beat Davin, for to my knowledge the farmers are with him.” “Well, we will knock him out in the convention.” “And if you do he will still beat you,” was the reply. Reference was made to this project of starting a second Conservative paper in THE LEADER of the 18th of November, and having to write to Mr. Dewdney on Departmental business I enclosed him a copy of THE LEADER of that date. In a long letter from Mr. Dewdney of the 24th of Nov., 1890, which commences “My Dear Davin,” the following paragraph occurs:—

“Your paper of the 18th duly reached me with the article which I presume you wished me to see in reference to the report that McGirr is endeavouring to get a second Conservative paper started in Regina. *This is the first I have heard of it* and I hardly fancy there can be much truth in it, unless some people have more money than they know what to do with.”

If the reporter should reproduce these words I will ask him to suggest to the printer to italicize the words, “*This is the first I have heard of it*,” because Mr. Dewdney was represented, by persons who profess to be confidential with him, as knowing all about it. But we must conclude now that he knew nothing about

it whatever. The second Conservative paper duly appeared and strange to say the advertisements from the Interior Department were conspicuous by their presence. (laughter.)

Time passed on. I received a letter early in January from Sir John Macdonald warning me to be on the *qui vive*, as he was about to dissolve. The day he dissolved he telegraphed me. This action showed I was the Government candidate and would have been conclusive with Conservatives were there not underhand influences and underhand assurances that after all “Sir John did not want Davin.” First one man, then another, was to oppose me, and ultimately it seemed that the gentleman was to be Mr. Tweed. I wrote Sir John Macdonald that it was ridiculous my being put to the expense of a contest; that the opposition was formulated from within my own party and by certain friends of Mr. Dewdney and that Tweed, who was a good Conservative, was likely to be the man.

On Feb. 6th, 1891, Sir John Macdonald's confidential private secretary wrote me a long letter in which the following occurs: “Surely you will be elected by acclamation. I cannot see how opposition could be worked up with any hope of success,” and he goes on with other remarks showing I had the entire confidence of Sir John Macdonald. But more wonderful to say, on the same day I received from Mr. Dewdney, to whom I had not written on the subject, two letters, one in autograph, the other official, both saying very much the same thing. The official letter of the Minister, to whom Sir John Macdonald had evidently said—

“Dewdney, I wish you'd stop this nonsense on the part of your friends stirring up strife against Davin. He is our candidate,” or something to that effect, ran as follows (I cannot read it all to you as there are some private observations in it):—

“OTTAWA, Feb. 7, 1891.

“MY DEAR DAVIN—I have been wiring some friends in Regina advising that they should offer you no opposition, and to let

you go in by acclamation," and after a few more sentences of a private nature,

"Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

E. DEWDNEY."

The autograph letter was almost identical :

"Feb. 7, '91

"MY DEAR DAVIN—I have been using my influence to induce our friends to give you no factious opposition and hope you may get in by acclamation." After one or two remarks of a private nature he concludes: "I shall do what I can for you.

Yours in haste,

E. DEWDNEY."

All I wanted was to be let alone. Well, you know how successful his efforts were. Well gentlemen, we got in. (Cheers.) Shall I ever forget that demonstration when I returned from the West—the whole town ablaze with torches, the people singing round and cheering, and this hall in which you stood crowded to receive me, all unworthy of such kindness? Gentlemen—Reformers, Conservatives—never. Canadians by birth, Canadians by adoption; Scotch, Irish, English, and my noble German friends, were all here. It was a great source of strength to me to have been supported by Reformers as well as Conservatives. I was indebted to no one but my constituency. I was far stronger than had I been elected by acclamation, and the issue shows that it would often be well for a constituency to unite on a good man and place the interests of the country above party. Never could I express my thanks—my gratitude—to the electors of this riding. If I may quote Schiller:

*All mein Sehnen will Ich, all mein Denken  
In des Leibe stillen Strom veeesenken  
Aber meine Liebe nicht.*

"My blood may lose its fire, my brain its power, and this frame perish even while conquering pain; but in the midst of the beatified, your goodness to me, would emerge a distinct emotion amid supernal joy (loud cheers).

I wrote Sir John Macdonald, among other things, of the way Herchmer had behaved to me, and he wrote back:

"EARNSCLIFFE,

Ottawa, April 16, 1891.

MY DEAR DAVIN,—I will have a rigid enquiry made into Herchmer's conduct during your election.—Always yours,

JOHN A. MACDONALD."

I replied as follows:

"REGINA, N.W.T., April 21st, 1891.

MY DEAR SIR JOHN,—Your note *re* Herchmer arrived this morning. It will require no very rigid enquiry into his conduct during and subsequent to elections to show you that he utterly disregarded White's telegram expressing your view that he should not interfere. He seems to have telegraphed back that my telegraphed complaint that he was interfering was "untrue." White, in his letter, asks me, "Who loaded me up the other way?" He is, I am sure, competent for his position, and by this time he must know how the Police were loaded up, and how, to use the language of those who despised the tyrant, the "poor devils" who voted for me have been loaded down. I have implied that I think a man at the head of a great organization should, if he be competent, know what is going on within it. I must retract this proposition, for I could not retain a shadow of respect for you, the leader of the Conservative party, if I thought you knew all that went on during the late election in this constituency. I hope and believe you did not know that the whole power of the Government at Ottawa was, so far as this could be done without declaring open war with me, used against me. The one cry on the part of men who are the chosen friends of a Minister of the Crown, was, "Sir John does not want Davin," and when they came to divide the meetings, the whole meeting went to the right for Davin, leaving these missionaries where the goats will go, on the left. Such a course was unjust to you in a constituency where no man in Canada could run against me and make it necessary for me to ask for a vote, unless, indeed, that man were yourself; but it was doubly unjust to you, for without, I think, taking too seriously my fifteen years' service, I have done more for you than the whole pack, if mul-

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tiplied fiftyfold, could do. I was unable to address the people in the east where this statement was made, but they gave their answer. I was not aware when the fight opened of the real magnitude of the odds against me. I do not wonder at the confidence of my opponents. I soon knew all—cypher telegrams and all—and laughed at the impotent machinations of such cowardly treachery as the history of ruffianism, should it ever be written, will never parallel. You know I telegraphed you, "I shall be elected by an overwhelming majority." The same heaven worketh. What can it accomplish that will advantage you? Alas! What has it accomplished? Intrigue—as you know well—is one of the most dangerous of all games unless played with consummate skill. To play at it successfully requires a mind of an ingenuity that nothing escapes. There was not a plan of my opponents—high or low—which I did not know almost *sooner* than their accomplices. Their schemes were circumvented almost as soon as conceived. I am, my dear Sir John, always sincerely yours,

N. F. DAVIN.

To the Right Honourable  
Sir John A Macdonald, G.C.B., etc."

#### THE SESSION.

Well, I went to Ottawa, and soon got down to business and began to consider what should be the work of the session. A week generally elapses without anything of a serious nature happening. Meanwhile I was maturing my plans and prepared resolutions which, after casting and re-casting them I handed in on the 8th, to be placed on the paper on the 11th of May:

(1) "May 11—Mr. Davin—That, whereas in 1883 an Act was passed granting second homesteads to those settlers who had completed the conditions of the first Homestead entry; and, whereas, in 1886, an Act was passed abolishing the policy of second Homesteads; and, whereas, in 1887 an Act was passed which acknowledged the principal and right of those second Homesteads, it should now be enacted that all those settlers who came in between 1st

June, 1883, and 2nd June, 1886, should, on completing their improvements, be granted a second Homestead.

(2) "May 11—Mr. Davin—That, whereas notwithstanding the liberal policy of the Government of Sir John A. Macdonald pursued in regard to the North-West Territories, and the well-established fact of the great fertility of the country, their settlement has not reached the proportions expected, this House is of opinion that a policy can be devised which will more rapidly people those Territories.

(3) "May 11—Mr. Davin—Address to His Excellency the Governor-General, praying that he will be pleased to cause an enquiry to be made into the conduct of Laurence W. Herchmer, Commissioner of the North West Mounted Police, generally, and especially with reference to his conduct during the last election in Western Assiniboia, and also into the conduct of the officers and men of the Force in the said constituency during that election.

(4) "May 11—Mr. Davin—That, whereas in the last Session of Parliament a motion dealing with Prairie Fires and the responsibility of Railway Companies for the same, especially in Manitoba and the North-West Territories, was in the main adopted by the Government and incorporated in a Bill; and whereas, the clause founded on such motion was eliminated in the Railway Committee of the Senate and the Bill returned to this House too late to admit of its being re-inserted; and whereas the nuisance sought to be remedied by such clause still exists, this House is of opinion that such an amendment to the Railway Act is imperatively necessary, with provision for an adequate penalty."

Meanwhile Dr. Brett and Mr. Betts, M.L.A.'s, arrived to discuss the terms of the new constitution with the Government. I saw Dr. Brett and asked Mr. Dewdney to give us an interview. He wrote me across the House as follows:

"HOUSE OF COMMONS, 14th May.

MY DEAR DAVIN—We will be all at the Committee to-morrow morning. If



it is likely to be a long meeting better make it Monday as on Saturday we will be in Council all day. If Monday will do say 11 a.m.

Yours sincerely,  
E. DEWDNEY."

The North-West members, Dr. Brett and Mr. Betts, and Senator Perley met in Senator Loughheed's room and had a long conference. 11 a.m. on Monday was unsuitable because some of the parties were away. Some had during the week to go to Toronto and when they were all once more in the city I asked Mr. Dewdney for an interview and received the following reply:—

"May 27, '91.

"MY DEAR DAVIN—I have arranged with Sir John T——— for 10 a.m. to-morrow. Meet at my office. Hope it will suit.—Yours sincerely,

E. DEWDNEY."

I gave all the parties notice. We met at Mr. Dewdney's office and went to Sir John Thompson's, where we had a long discussion on the character of the future constitution. Towards the end of May our great leader was stricken. But he rallied, and fearing the subjects I was about to bring before Parliament, and about which I had written and spoken to him, might disturb him, I wrote saying that if they gave him the least worry I would drop them. He wrote one of the few last letters he was ever to sign.

"EARNSCLIFFE,

Ottawa, 27th May, 1891.

"MY DEAR DAVIN,—I hope to be able to be out to-morrow and to have a talk with you on the various subjects you have written me about, i.e., Herchmer, Court House at Regina, grants to military bodies and prairie fires.—Yours, faithfully,

JOHN A. MACDONALD."

N. F. Davin, Esq., M.P."

Alas! That interview and that "talk" were never to take place. On Thursday, the 28th, instead of talking with him on business, I went to Earnscliffe to enquire how he was. I had intended only enquiring and leaving my card, but her lady-ship had seen me coming and had directed Sir John's valet,

"Ben," to tell me I was to go in. I remained there the greater part of the afternoon talking with Lady Macdonald, who had strong hopes that Sir John might recover. On the afternoon of Friday I was preparing to speak on the attack on Sir Charles Tupper, when Dalton McCarthy came in and said to me, "Don't speak: it's all up; Sir John has had a paralytic stroke."

"The grants to military bodies," mentioned in Sir John's letter, meant grants to rifle associations which Sir John had promised me; but though I showed Caron his letter promising me these grants, I could not move that most stubborn of men. But I brought him to time in the matter of scrip. (Cheers.) When I had him to sign Mr. Phelan's certificate, which was the last, he said, "By Jove, Davin, you had better come and run the Militia Department yourself." (Laughter.)

SCRIP.

I need not go into the fight I have had for the scrip. You know how I fought for it every year. How, repulsed again and again, I still came up to the charge. Now we accomplished the scrip victory partly by agitating in the House, but especially by action in caucus, which last induced Sir John Macdonald to give me a reference. When Mr. Dewdney became Minister of the Interior, I wrote to him asking for his co-operation in getting the scrip. He wrote back to me that the matter belonged to the Department of Militia. In the spring of 1889 I again sought to get his active aid, and he wrote me, on February 25th, 1889, a letter in which he said: "Referring to your letter in regard to the claims of certain persons to receive military bounty scrip as scouts, I understand from the Comptroller of the North-West Mounted Police that you have had an interview with him, and that you are to see Sir John Macdonald and arrange for an interview on the subject with the Premier, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Militia."

Well, we got the scrip. But you would not have got it, notwithstanding the legislation, had I not remained in Ottawa to take the Department of Militia by the throat. (Loud cheers.)

## SECOND HOMESTEADS.

On June 1st my motion respecting second homesteads was called. I could not get one of my colleagues from the North-West to second it. I think it was Mr. Macdonald from the Lower Provinces who came to my aid. I pointed out that we had some seventy new members in the House—something like one-third new blood. I recalled that last year Mr. Dewdney, the Minister of the Interior, said: "I do not intend to retreat from the position I have taken on the subject. I will bring the matter before my colleagues again, and, if they feel inclined to change the policy and to extend the provisions of this amended Act for another year, I will not stand in the way; although, at the same time, I may express my opinion in a diametrically opposite sense." Commenting on this I said: "I do not know whether my hon. friend brought this question of second homesteading before his colleagues, but we shall be very glad indeed to hear of his having brought it before his colleagues and taken the side of justice and not injustice."

I should say that at the time for presenting petitions I presented one from the settlers in the Bluffs signed by Mr. Joseph Holden and others and proceeded to read it. It was admirably written and in an argumentative style; but I was called to order, for it is out of order to read a petition. Referring to this I said: "When I was interrupted in reading that petition, those petitioners, farmers as they are, were going on to say that they had read that pamphlet, (that is, the immigration pamphlet pointing out that second homesteads could be had) and that they had come out in consequence of the representations it contained. In what condition do they find themselves? They look around and see men who came into the country in 1882 getting second homesteads, men who came in during 1882, before the Act giving second homesteads came into existence, those men, such is the farce in consequence of that impulsive repeal of 1886, who came into the country without any motive as to securing a second homestead before

their minds, obtaining second homesteads, while men who came here with the vivid hope of obtaining a second homestead before them cannot get the second homestead."

I then brought forward every argument I could think of which might sway the Government. The Minister of the Interior replied, declaring his well known views and quoting those of Mr. White, his predecessor, as against second homesteads. Mr. Laurier, the leader of the Opposition, came nobly to my aid—and though I am opposed to him in politics I will say this that he is one of the finest and most chivalrous gentlemen that ever sat in a House of Commons. (Cheers.) The third time I spoke in the House in 1887, he left his seat and came to me and congratulated me and told me that I had got the ear of the House. I said, "Do you think so?" He said, "You have." You will observe that when I ask for justice for a few the fallacy is resorted to of assuming that I am advocating a general policy and then the evil of that policy is pointed out. Mr. Laurier puts it admirably: "The House, in my opinion, should remember that the principle which is involved in this motion is not the principle of a general policy. The hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Davin) does not propose that the House should at all depart from the policy which now obtains in the North-West with regard to the settlement of land; but he points out very forcibly, in my opinion, that certain men may be suffering injustice if they are not granted what he now claims for them. What he now claims for them is that the provisions of the law, such as they existed when these men settled in the North-West Territories, should be carried out in their entirety. By the Act of 1883 the settlers in the Territories were allowed a second homestead. The object of Parliament, I suppose, in granting a second homestead was to induce settlers to go in there. So far as my knowledge goes, on the other side of the line settlers are only entitled to one homestead and nothing more. This Parliament granted a second homestead obviously for the purpose of

inducing settlers to go in there, and it is to be presumed that when they came in and settled, they expected they would have a second homestead instead of having only one, as on the other side of the line. Now, for some reason or other, which I do not question here, the law was altered in 1886, and we came back to the provisions which obtained before, that settlers should be entitled only to one homestead; and the hon. gentleman now asks, not for any departure from the law as it now exists, but he submits that it would be only fair, just and equitable that these settlers, who settled under the law of 1883, and from that year up to 1885, when the law was altered, should be treated exactly as they expected to be treated when they went into the territory."

Now, the matter could not possibly be put more clearly or more cogently than in those simple but eloquent words of the leader of the Opposition. They are the outcome of clear reasoning and an enlightened political conscience. Mr. Watson, of Marquette, who on previous occasions opposed me, supported me now. My friend, Colonel Tisdale, then made a suggestion that I should withdraw my motion and wait for the Bill. You remember when the Bill came up—late in the Session, and late in the Session you can do nothing. But I was not to be so caught. Mr. Macdowall, of Saskatchewan, opposed me, but he, like others, attacked the principle of second homesteading, not my position of justice, and which has nothing whatever to do with the policy of second homesteading. Mr. Daly opposed my resolution on a technicality and, of course, hoped that I would wait until the Bill was introduced. Sir John Thompson also wished I should wait for the Bill. I did pretty well, as we shall see, when the Bill came up. I doubt very much if I should have done so well had I postponed the resolution and not stuck to my guns. I will not deal here with the remarks of Sir John Thompson. Mr. Mills of Bothwell followed, and he also supported me. Nothing could be clearer than the way Mr. Mills, a con-

stitutional lawyer an erudite student, and an authority on a subject of this kind, puts it: "It seems to me that no better opportunity can occur than this for the House to say what are its views on the subject before us, and if the hon. Minister of the Interior proposes to introduce legislation on the subject at a later period of the Session, he will have the opinion of the House to guide him in preparing the Bill. I see no such objections to the resolution which the hon. gentleman has submitted as those presented by the hon. Minister of Justice. What are the demands of this resolution? The fact is that a number of settlers went into Manitoba and the North-West Territories between 1883 and 1886, and took up homesteads, with the assurance that upon completing their improvements and being entitled to their patents, they acquired a right, if they saw proper, to take up a second homestead. It seems to me that the moment these parties entered their names in the Dominion Lands office for the first homestead, they obtained the pledge of this House that upon the completion of the improvements and residence on the first homestead for a certain length of time, they should be entitled to a second homestead."

Colonel O'Brien also supported me and said: "I have had some little experience in a matter analogous to this in the free lands district in Ontario, and have more than once had the occasion to denounce what I thought was the unjust conduct of the Provincial Government in departing by subsequent legislation from the conditions upon which settlers had occupied their lands, and under which they had acquired rights equivalent to those in the case under our consideration; and I am not at all prepared, by my vote in this House or elsewhere, to say that a different rule ought to be applied to provincial legislation of a similar character to what ought to be applied to Dominion legislation in the North-West, unless I am clearly convinced, which I am not so far by the remarks of the hon. Minister of Justice, that these people, who entered on certain conditions, have forfeited their right to the fulfilment of these conditions."

I cannot avoid, therefore, voting for the resolution of the hon. member for Assiniboia." There is not a more upright man in the House than Col. O'Brien.

We did not have his vote, for he happened to be out of the House at the time. Quite a number of my brother Conservative members were convinced I was right, but they were afraid of bringing the Government majority to zero.

Mr. German, who said he had friends in the North-West, supported me and then Sir Hector Langevin moved the adjournment of the House and appealed to me to consent. I refused unless my question remained at the head of the paper. The House divided and the majority for the Government was only fourteen. But Mr. O'Brien did not vote. Mr. McNeill, who agreed with me, voted with the Government. Two or three others did the same and the moral majority of the Government did not reach nearly the number of Ministers present. This placed the question in an excellent position, and when the Dominion Lands Amending Act came up Sir John Thompson assured me the question would be considered during the recess with a view to action of some kind.

Many of you have come and spoken to me on a subject that occupies me very little and you seem very anxious that I should be in the Ministry, but remember had I been in the Ministry it is possible, nay most probable, I could not have done as much for you as I have done as a private independent Conservative member. Getting into a Ministry might serve myself, but it would not make me in a way special to you one bit more useful to you, although many are under the impression it would. I might indeed be able to do large general service I cannot do now, in the benefits of which you, as citizens of the North-West, would share. But the men in parliamentary history who have effected the greatest things were not Ministers of the Crown. And to a generous mind there are higher rewards than political honours. Sir Robert Peel, after he had repealed the Corn Laws, said he would perhaps be execrated by the

monopolist, "but it may be," he added, "that I shall leave a name sometimes remembered with expressions of good will in those places which are the abode of men whose lot it is to labour and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow—a name remembered with expressions of good will when they shall recreate their exhausted strength with abundant and untaxed food, the sweeter because it is no longer leavened with a sense of injustice." But in the same speech he acknowledged that the great boon to the working classes of England was not really effected by him, but by the "unadorned eloquence of Richard Cobden." And it is more to me than honours to know that on many a prairie farm there are those whose burdens I have lightened and whose difficulties I have smoothed away, and I might not have been able to do this so effectively if I had not been a free man. (Cheers).

#### COMMISSIONER HERCHMER.

Having taken part in several debates, I, on July 22nd, asked when the report of Fred. White would come down. On the same night in committee of ways and means I made a speech the argument in which was never made before, and which speech many of you must have—in which I showed that already the North-West has paid back to the East every penny which has been spent on it.

July 27th the Herchmer motion came up. I had to get Col. Amyot to second my motion. When I asked Mr. Macdowall he flatly refused; when I asked Mr. Davis he refused. So I had to fall back on an Eastern man. You know the result—an enquiry under oath which is now going forward.

#### ALWAYS ON HAND.

On September 11th, on the vote of \$6,000 for the Prince Albert Crown Lands and Timber Agent's office, in "concurrence" Mr. Laurier and Mr. Trow spoke with that hopeless ignorance of Western affairs which characterizes so many members on both sides, and I rose and showed what the true state of things is, and what are the advantages of this country. In fact, as you will see by look-



ing through *Hansard*, at whatever hour of day or night, or whether in committee or out of it, or in concurrence, the interests of the North-West were assailed you will find me sallying from my sentry box and tapping the dangerous character on the shoulder. (Laughter and cheers).

#### BANFF PARK.

On the same or on a succeeding evening the Banff Park squatters' case was brought up. I had, however, asked Mr. Davis whether he was satisfied in the matter and he had told me he was. So after a few remarks I let it slide. But I had promised to watch it with him.

#### IMMIGRATION.

At the close of September I spoke strongly in favour of immigration. You have all read what I said. In a previous session I made a disturbing speech on immigration. The morning following I had telegrams from Manitoba on my table congratulating me on that speech. That speech, combined with the efforts of Mr. Daly and Mr. A. W. Ross, led to a caucus and now that time has elapsed there is no impropriety in telling you what happened. Some of my friends in Ottawa said they feared I had destroyed my prospects—as if I were thinking of my prospects!—and when I went to Toronto some of my friends there said I was ruined for that “the old man” never forgave. What did that grand old man do at the caucus? He said they had met to consider the subject of immigration; that it was a subject in which the Western members took a deep interest; that it was desirable to hear from them, “and I will first call on my friend Mr. Davin.” He used that language to show his whole party that my bold pleading for a better immigration policy had made no difference between him and me. He preferred followers who effaced themselves, but he respected the independent man, and he told a mutual friend a short time before his death that I was the most independent man he ever knew in political life. Now, you remember that before I was elected people said when I went down to Ottawa I should be a perfect

slave to Sir John Macdonald. That was because I was, have been, am, and always will be a good party man; but, when the interests of my constituents and the bidding of a political leader clash, which road would you have me take?

Well, what was the result? We had \$200,000 placed in the estimates for immigration purposes. For a few years the immigration function of the Department of Agriculture was starved on a paltry \$50,000. We have already in the Territories and Manitoba seen some of the results of the new policy then inaugurated. But I tell you our system of bringing immigrants into this country needs to be revolutionized. We want more power to plan, greater insight, greater energy, more of that which is the greatest of all things in human affairs—more of the power of adapting means to ends. (Cheers.)

I have, as you are aware, brought before Parliament the necessity of finding water in those parts of the country where it is difficult to get it. Now, I believe spending a little money in finding water for settlers would give you a potent immigration force—for satisfied settlers are the best immigration agents. (Cheers.)

#### THE RAILWAY BILL.

You will remember I introduced a railway bill this session and the previous session. Sir John Macdonald and Sir John Thompson in 1890 agreed to accept my fire break clause. They carried out their agreement and in the Government Bill the clause duly appeared. It passed all the stages in the House of Commons and being in a Government measure I thought it was safe. What was my surprise to see that it was returned from the Senate without the clause! I went and saw Mr. Abbott, now Premier and leader of the Senate, then leader of the Senate, and a member of the Cabinet without a portfolio, and I asked him how it happened that when the Government had accepted the section, it was thrown out in the Senate. Mr. Abbott's reply was: “It was your own men who did it.” I asked who “our own men” were, and he told me Mr.

Perley and Mr. Lougheed, who had it thrown out in the Railway Committee. Mr. Lougheed had I think by this time gone home, but I went and saw Senator Perley, who told me he moved the excision of the clause compelling railways to plough fire breaks. Why? He said he had been in correspondence with Mr. Van Horne and that he had a much better scheme, which he intended to introduce this next—that is this last session, and I am bound to believe he thought his plan better than mine. Mr. Lougheed assured me this session that as regards him Mr. Abbott was mistaken. Well, I introduced a bill this last session providing that railways should plough fire breaks; that they should fence, and that they should have air breaks and automatic couplers on freight trains. I wanted to save your crops from fire, your cattle from being killed on the track, and I wanted to limit the destruction of human life in the freight train railway service. I so far succeeded as to get the Bill read a second time, its principle being thus adopted and then, as in the case of all railway bills, it was referred to the Railway Committee. You have little idea of the power of the railway interest in that House. I met Judge Clark several times; and I must say he was singularly fair and just. In the interest of his railway he did not want to have the responsibility of making the fire breaks thrown on them, but was ready to agree to any fair arrangement, barring this. When we went into the Railway Committee I saw that the whole power of the C.P.R. and the Grand Trunk was against me. I may here repeat that Van Horne does not object to pay his share, no matter how much it may be adjudged to be. What he objects to is to have the onus, the duty of initiating those fire breaks at their door. He is afraid of crops of actions and he fears, and not unreasonably I admit, that juries would always decide against the railway. I have reason to believe he admits the justice of having to fence through settled districts. But the Grand Trunk interest was very bitter against this clause and the cost of automatic

couplers and air breaks was dwelt on, I think, by a member interested in the Grand Trunk. Well, my bill was garrotted; but a recommendation was made to the Government to consider the whole question during the recess and Mr. Bowell, the Acting Minister of Railways, promised it should be considered. No man from the North-West or Manitoba voted with me in that Committee except Mr. Watson, the member for Marquette. But we have gained something. The railway has acknowledged that it is morally bound to pay the greater part for the fire breaks; that fences should be erected in settled districts of the Territories; and I may tell you that in every case where cattle have been killed I have put myself in communication with the railway authorities and have got for the owner within twenty per cent. of what he claimed, which is about as much as a jury would give; and what is the railway doing to-day without any law, but in consequence of my agitation? It is ploughing fire breaks. (Cheers.)

#### THE DOMINION LANDS ACT.

I also introduced a Bill amending the Dominion Lands Act, making important provisions, and early in the Session I got Sir John Thompson to promise he would accept my Bill and make it a Government measure. You saw how when Mr. Dewdney brought in his Bill he accepted all my clauses except the second homestead clause, and in regard to that Sir John Thompson made an emphatic statement that it would be considered during the recess. Meanwhile, things for which we had been contending even before I entered Parliament, such as second homesteading, the pre-emption and other reforms which could be effected by order-in-council, were put through. All your departmental business I attended to; answered 1365 letters, and wrote concerning many of them to the Departments. When the notice about grazing lands appeared, I at once went to the Department and had it withdrawn, and it is only fair to Mr. Dewdney to say he seems to have known nothing whatever about its publication, and the moment

his attention was called to it he countermanded it.

The great reform which is in the future is the resumption by the Government of all the odd sections. I cannot dwell on this here, but next Session I will show it can be done on economic grounds which will commend themselves to the Government and the C.P.R.

#### SUGAR AND COAL OIL.

I promised some of my friends I would try to have the duty on sugar lowered. That disappeared, not by reason of any action of mine, but because of the action of the United States. I could have wished we had adopted the same policy exactly as the United States; but the technical part of the question is intricate, and when Mr. Paterson's motion came on—it was, after all, a very small matter—I voted with the Government.

With the diffusive use of the electric light in towns, the price of coal oil is one that affects the farmer mainly and the very poor in the cities. I hope next Session the duty on coal oil will either be greatly reduced or wholly disappear. The price of coal oil is extravagantly high. (Cheers.)

#### AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY.

Four great firms of implement makers have become one. It looks ominous, but they say they can sell cheaper and produce a better article, and that is of course quite possible. But I will watch their action closely and if the farmer suffers by this combine I will fight hard against the duty on agricultural implements. Up to the present I am convinced the farmer has gained by the development of our own manufactures.

#### MAIL CLERKS.

After the House rose I made a strong effort to get justice for the mail clerks. During the session I had seen Mr. Haggart on the subject of their special allowance and as he agreed with me and said it would be all right, and as I knew my brother members from the Red River to the Pacific were interesting themselves in it, I troubled myself no more. I was occupied with several important matters which required

my whole time. I was amazed when I found he could not carry out his policy. The Auditor-General seems to be the Ethiopian in the wood pile, but a bill with a single clause would have settled it. I am afraid Mr. Foster, the Finance Minister, in this and other things throws his influence a little too much on the side of cheese-paring regardless of justice. It is a fault on the right side I grant. The policy which seems to obtain—witness the way they want to pay the election enumerators and the census enumerators, on calculations grounded in utter ignorance of the North-West—is cut down salaries, remuneration of all kinds regardless of the right and equity of the matter, of time and place and this is poor policy and poor finance. Mr. Foster is a clever man and his financial statements have greatly improved, but the only distinctive feature seems to be “cut down”—cut down even the immigration vote, utterly regardless of the effect on the country. This I consider mighty poor “finance.” It is not the finance of Pitt or Gladstone. I need hardly tell you I am against squandering and boodling, but I do not believe there is any financial genius shown in mere cutting down. A financier like Gladstone would put a half a million into the estimates, and at the same time see that an energetic immigration scheme was set on foot, and would in five years bring for the \$2,500,000 spent four or five millions into the treasury.

#### THE SCANDALS.

And now, electors of Western Assiniboia, one word as to that which kept us at Ottawa so long. Two great committees investigating scandals were at work for five long months—the Privilege and Elections Committee and the Public Accounts Committee. A frightful state of things was shown to have existed for years in the Public Works Department. Boodling had been reduced to a system of gigantic proportion and daring, but that did not show that other departments are corrupt. The Government led in that committee by Sir John Thompson, not only did not seek to shield

the guilty, but the moment Sir John Thompson saw that there was any foundation for Mr. Tarte's charges he told Mr. Osler to co-operate with that gentleman's counsel in bringing out everything. The Conservative party has no interest in shielding boodlers and Sir John Thompson's action and Mr. Abbott's language in the Senate show that it will get no quarter from them.

#### YOUTH THE SOURCE OF POWER.

I was enabled to visit Toronto and be present at the election of officers in the society I founded over fourteen years ago—the Toronto Young Men's Liberal-Conservative Association, now numbering nearly 3,000. I was also at a dinner given by the new President, Mr. Hopkins, at the Albany; and again at the inauguration of the new President. On each occasion I spoke and was greatly interested in the noble enthusiasm of these young men. How I came to found this Society was on this wise. I saw that the defeat of 1873 had entirely crushed the energy of the older men. It was a terrible defeat and had taken all the power and go out of the elder politicians. I said: "We must get at the hope, the buoyancy, the enthusiasm, the fresh energy of the young;" and so I founded this society, which became the mother of many, and in the contest of 1878 they did great service, as they have done in every contest since. I have referred to the way I have struggled and you know my methods. You know I am not discouraged by first or second failures, but go right at it again. I saw at the battle of Gravelotte a German regiment ordered to take a strong position, the slope up to which was honey-combed with rifle pits. At the word of command they dashed up, but before the belching out of fire and smoke and bullets they came reeling back. Again they were reformed and again sent up and again the blasts as from the seven-fold gates of hell sent them back. Once again they were reformed and again put to it. They made a gallant charge but before half-way up the slope they fell shattered back. Just then a fresh regiment came up. Both regiments were

placed together, and Van Moltke himself appeared at their head and gave the word, riding with them to the base of the hill. The bugle rang. Up they went with a shout and a line from Arndt's great song rose, their battle hymn:

Und bringe die blutigen Gaben.

Up and over a fiery hail of bullets and in the face of outbursting death and terror and flame, and took the position. That exemplifies the method dear to my own heart, but you must have the pulse of youth somewhere for things like this. (Great cheering.)

To age we look for counsel, wisdom; to full blown manhood for balanced force; to youth for power, pure and simple; and a wise statesman will always seek to combine in his party, in his government, these three forces. Where you have a government of old men, you have a government hesitating, over cautions, wanting in initiative, a "rest-and-be-thankful" attitude, an administration based on the paralyzing principle of "to-morrow." When you have age, manhood, youth combined, you have caution, force, will, decision, promptness, efficiency. Burke says, "That which cannot stand with credit, cannot stand long," and we have come to a time in our history when the people will insist on integrity and ability in high places. My German friends present will remember what a great German poet says:

*"Blick umher, O Freund, und siehe  
Sorgsam wie der weise sieht.  
Was vergehen muss vergehet  
Wes bestehen kann besteht,  
Was geschehen will geschieht."*

That is, if I may venture to render it:

Look around, O Friend, and see,  
Griefless as the wise behold,  
What must go, disappears,  
What can stand, mocks the years,  
What will happen will happen of old.

The line I wish to emphasize is—

"What can stand, will stand."

and, therefore, I hope and believe that we shall see a Government formed, strong in wisdom, in statesmanlike resource, in those thews and sinews of thinking and expression without which under a parliamentary system you cannot have an administration



equal to the demands and difficulties of our democratic life. There is no use in governing unless you govern wisely; there is no use in being wise as a government unless you can impart your wisdom; none in being able to devise fruitful schemes, unless you can persuade to their acceptance. When I was a little school boy I read that great contest between Ulysses and Ajax for the armour of Achilles, and I never forgot the power God has given man in speech. It is a Divine attribute. Speech was the instrument of creation, and it was in consequence of a brief sentence that the footsteps of light first glanced in the far pathless spaces of gloom. Our greatest thoughts are lost unless we can

incarnate them in words. "Logos"—Word—was a choice and chosen name of the Saviour of mankind. We cannot hold council without speech, and from the most ancient times—long before a representative system was dreamed of—it was the great instrument of government. It has been, and is to-day, the great instrument of government in England. When finely noted it can not only impart thought and marshal plans but can introduce into civic life a vibrating spiritual power; can inspire and raise man far above a mere obeyer of laws, and fill him with a patriotic faith that will enable him to truly live and if necessary nobly die for his country. (Loud cheering.)



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